

Current Situation of Moroccan Women and Opportunities Amal Provides

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Abstract

Women's issues in the west have been in the news for many years now and are a very popular social issue. In Morocco, this is not the case. In order to understand women's empowerment there, one must first adopt the cultural context. In order to do this I decided to volunteer at Amal Women's Training Center and Moroccan Restaurant. I spent eight weeks fully immersed in Moroccan culture and six of those weeks volunteering alongside the service staff and trainees at the center. I observed operations of the center and interviewed staff on how things are done and what they see as the status that women occupy in society and its developments over the years. I found that Amal is successful at training disadvantaged women for positions within the workforce which gives them the ability to be financially independent. Overall, I observed that women are slowly gaining more opportunities in the public sphere and access to more legal rights. I also learned that there is a distinct divide between individuals in service positions and those in administrative positions. Amal is a successful organization at empowering women with the skills to be financially independent but could implement other programs and ideas to empower women fully.

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Introduction

Opportunities for women around the world are different while some countries like Denmark have elected a woman to the position of Prime Minister, in the United States we have yet to elect a woman president. Other smaller but still important building block opportunities are available in one country but not in the next. What underlies the reasons for the opportunities, or lack thereof, for women in different countries is a topic that interests me. To better understand the reasons for these disparities in opportunities my research consisted of two parts, one looking at attitudes, values and legal rights regarding women and the other as a participant observer in an institute in Morocco that was developed to provide opportunities to disadvantaged women.

Amal Women's Training Center and Moroccan Restaurant is a non-profit organization founded in 2012 by Nora Fitzgerald Belahcen in Marrakech as a response to the situations of many disadvantaged women in Morocco. Amal's website defines disadvantaged women as those who are widowed, divorced, single mothers, orphans, those who have worked as child maids, and women with little or no education, though this is not an exclusive list of women who come to Amal. The center began its operation baking and selling pastries and now the center is fully self-sustaining and operates a popular restaurant (Amal Women's Training Center and Moroccan Restaurant, 2016). Recently, they have opened a second location that focuses on providing catering to numerous events in Morocco as well as offering cooking classes (Yassine A., personal communication, March 21, 2017). My research consisted of spending six weeks volunteering at the center and understanding its daily operations and the service it provides. Because of the potentially vulnerable status of the women at the center, my interactions with

them for the purpose of research was minimal. Yet, I was able to observe the women using Amal's services and see how Amal interacts with the women. This paper provides an overview of the current situation of women in Morocco, what the Amal organization is doing to address those issues, and a brief evaluation of its efforts.

Literature Review

I. Background

The Kingdom of Morocco is located in Northern Africa though its geographical location is not what sets it apart. Its population is made up of a diverse mix of French, Arabic, Berber and Spanish peoples and its culture is even more lively. The mixing of different cultures means that Morocco has developed values that are both uniquely its own and a mix of all its cultural traditions.

Moroccan culture itself sees differences in the role of sexes, wherein each gender is seen as having a distinct and complementary role. It is a common belief that men and women have different identities and roles defined by nature; the union of a man and woman in marriage, it is thought, makes the individuals whole (Roignan, Zahid, & Hofner Saphiere, 2015).

Islam is Morocco's official religion and is a highly valued part of Moroccan culture. But it is also an example of an Islamic country that is very tolerant. One can find many others practicing religions such as Judaism and Christianity. Since perceptions of Islam throughout the world are so mixed, it is important for this research that the readers at least be aware of the basic aspect of Islamic religion.

Understanding the very basic aspects of Islam offers a new perception into how women are viewed within the country. On a basic level the religion of Islam believes in one God, Allah. He is the one creator, commander, and provider and is the only God who should be worshipped and obeyed. Islamic law is outlined in the Shariah and is meant to guide Muslims in every aspect of their life (Unicef, 2011). Shariah law is the law that governs disciplines and principles between Muslim individuals. On the larger scale, it governs the interactions between communities, groups, and social and economic organizations. Under Shariah law all actions are classified and then administered through the government. Worshipping Allah is the first behavior that is outlined in Shariah law, this includes prayers, charity, fasting, and pilgrimage. Shariah law should not be confused with Islamist states who take a non-traditional and often hardline approach to its interpretation, those states “take the letter of the law” (Black Letter Law) without regard to precedence” (Hisham Kabbani, M.). These states tend to interpret Islamic law very narrowly and reject the traditional scholarship and teachings (Hisham Kabbani, M.) In Morocco, Shariah law follows precedents that have been set over the years and is not like that of Islamist states. Pew Research found that in Morocco 83% of the population was in favor of making Shariah law the official law of the country (Lipka, 2017). It is under Shariah law that sex outside of marriage is forbidden. This principle was enacted to preserve the lineage and to ensure the continuation of human life. In most places, including Morocco, punitive laws are put in place to enforce it. Article 490 of the Moroccan penal code states that any persons of the opposite sex who are not related by marriage and have sexual relations can be punished by serving one month to a year in prison (“Canada: Immigration and Refugee Board”, 2013). Divorce is another one of the principles that is outlined by Shariah law and restricted for

women. The religion of Islam preaches that women and men are of equal worth. The typical household duty of a woman is to care for the house and children while the man is providing for the family. It teaches that a women's sexuality is to be respected and acted upon only by her husband. Modesty of dress is required for both sexes and in most places a woman's beauty and sexual attributes are not meant for display in the public. Wearing a hijab for modesty is instructed in the Quran when women are in the public sphere. In Morocco, Islam is the largest followed religion and because of that many of the country's laws, beliefs and values are based off Islamic religious principles. One important aspect of Islam places value on the separation of duties between a man and woman.

II. Women's Legal Rights in Morocco

Since religion is such an important aspect of the culture, some laws closely reflect Shariah law. Recently the minimum age of marriage was increased from 15 to 18 years. Some Islamists argued against this change. The outcome of their argument is the provision that judges can override this law if a legal guardian consents to the marriage (Unicef, 2011; Otto, 2010). The idea behind the increase in marriage age was part of the King's reform toward equality between the sexes. He increased the women's age of consent to better match the age at which men were able to get married (Zoglin, 2009). In Morocco, Shariah law is applied to personal status issues including divorce and inheritance (Unicef, 2011). In 2004, the Moroccan legal code was updated to allow for women to receive inheritance, though there are still restrictions (Unicef, 2011). Although both sexes can file for divorce, women must have more specific reasons unless the husband grants his wife permission to file for the divorce. For a woman to file for a divorce, it must be because the husband can no longer financially provide

for her or has broken the marriage contract that the couple agreed upon before marriage. The only other way a woman can file for divorce is if it is through mutual consent with her husband, such as issues of irreconcilable differences. In some cases of mutual consent, a woman is to pay the husband for the divorce (Unicef, 2011 & Otto, 2010). If a man is accused of adultery the woman has a right to divorce but it is dependent on the consent of the family and what the status of the husband is. On the other hand, if a woman is adulterous the pressure from the community is strong and the man will likely divorce her even if he ultimately forgives her. ("Canada: Immigration and Refugee Board", 2013). Another update that came with the 2004 reform allows women custody of their children in the case of divorce. Prior to this change and under the old personal status code, women were not able to have custody of their children (Zoglin, 2009). In 1985 the old Moudawana was ratified and it legalized polygamy and forced marriages. In 1992 the Women's Action Union launched an initiative for 100 million signatures that eventually forced the king to reform the family code (Centre for Public Impact, 2016). Reactions to the updated Moudawana, the new family code, have been mixed. However, research shows perceptions are slowly changing to become more positive (Zoglin, 2009). Some common issues reported with the new family code involve challenges with the legal system and a general lack of trust in it. Another issue with Moudawana is that many women do not know what their rights are and do not take advantage of what it offers (Zoglin, 2009).

In 2011, Moroccans voted to approve a referendum that would weaken the King's power but also give more equality to women. Over 98% of voters in the country approved of this change. (Labott & Alami, 2011). According to a BBC news report, the referendum was proposed by King Mohammed VI as a response to pro-reform protests that broke out in

February 2011. It guarantees women the same social and civic equality as men and makes some changes to the power of the 400-year-old Moroccan dynasty (“Q&A: Morocco’s referendum”, 2011).

III. Bodily Integrity Rights

Virginity is very important in Moroccan culture and in the religion of Islam. A story in *The Last Storytellers* outlines the importance of virginity, in the story titled “The Eyes of Ben’Adi” a man did not trust women. Because he didn’t trust women not to cheat on him he decided to marry a child that would grow up never having seen another man but him. This would ensure that when he finally married her as an adult she would still be a virgin and that when they were married she would not be able to commit adultery against him (Hamilton, p. 139, 2015). Sex outside of the confines of marriage is illegal but researchers cite a common attitude that boys can engage in it without as much social stigma as their female counterparts (Dialmy, 2002; Obermeyer, 2000). In a 2006 study of Moroccan women, Kadri et al. found that infidelity was judged as something taken less seriously when a male is engaging in it (2006). Research shows that Moroccan women feel like men are allowed more freedom to engage in adultery and infidelity without stigmatization. Other attitudes include how women feel about their sexual rights. A summary of attitudes at a human rights conference in the Middle East and North Africa found that the general attitude toward women’s sexual rights consider their body as the “reproductive property” of both her family and society. Despite the reform law passed in 2004 that gave women more rights, it did not give protection to single mothers and those who get pregnant outside of marriage. Workers at “100% Mamans” a non-profit defending the rights of single mothers and their children, say that most single mothers are abandoned by their

families, ignored by mosques, treated poorly by hospital staff and, if also a rape victim, not believed by the police (Erlanger & Mekhennet, 2009).

The concept of body purity plays out in the expressions of sex and sexuality both inside and outside of the confines of marriage. A 2007 study to understand various aspects of women's sexuality including information on women's attitudes about sex revealed the view that Moroccan society predominately considers a woman's body a reproductive vessel. Not surprisingly, many women share this viewpoint and believe the main objective of sex is reproductive. The second most common response by women about the purpose of sex was to pleasure the husband, very few responded that sex was for their own pleasure (Kadri, et al. 2007). Another common belief about sex is that it can only take place between a dominating male and a subordinate. The submissive partner can be anything from a boy, to a wife or even a prostitute (Obermeyer, 2000). At a conference for women of the Middle East and North Africa, discussions revealed that the general attitude of women towards sexuality is that many still felt like they lacked control over their bodies. The reasons women cited for this feeling included the influence of laws, religion and patriarchy (Amando, 2004).

In a country where sexuality is still a taboo topic, researchers note that changes have been made. The rates of premarital sex are increasing and women are waiting longer to get married. Dialmy (2002) found that the age of marriage is getting older: In 1960, the average age for marriage was 17 years, when 42 years later, the average age of marriage had increased to 26 years (p. 78)). In 2011, Unicef found that the average age had stayed at 26. Researchers identified as possible explanations for this increase urbanization and the schooling of women (Dialmy, 2002).

IV. Progressive Movements

Other changes are constantly being made in Moroccan culture and politics regarding the reorganization of the strict public and private space divide between men and women. In 1967, United Nations Member states adopted a declaration on the elimination of discrimination of women. It calls for states to eliminate laws, customs, regulations and practices that are discriminatory towards women (United Nations, 2014). The later ratified convention describes discrimination as “any distinction, exclusion or restriction made on the basis of sex which has the effect or purpose of impairing or nullifying the recognition, enjoyment or exercise by women, irrespective of their marital status, on a basis of equality of men and women, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil or any other field.” (United Nations, p.6, 2014). Despite progress in the Moroccan legal code, judges particularly conservative ones are slow to enforce it to its full extent (Alami, 2013). Organizations like Al Amane that help women navigate the legal system are needed to combat the resistance they may encounter (Alami, 2013). The Moroccan feminist movement has been working towards abolishing discrimination against women and fulfilling the goals of the declaration.

V. Workforce

In the 1960's rural Moroccan women started to take jobs outside of the home. Poor and undereducated women accepted jobs in low-paying industries. The first women to pursue work outside of the home were women whose husbands earned little and that the women were not proud of their own work (Sadiqi & Ennaji, 2006). Within the public space, women generally

struggle to find employment. During times of economic downturn, they pay the highest price when unemployment and budget cuts increase. The loosening of tradition in Morocco is seen in the increase of divorce rates and the growing number of female heads of household. Sadiqi and Ennaji (2006) found that lower class populations in urban areas are where the largest number of female heads of household can be found. Because of this families supported by a woman's salary are most affected by poverty. Institutes like Amal in Marrakesh are needed because even though the United Nations adopted a declaration to abolish gender discrimination it is still present in Moroccan society. Amal women's training institute works with disadvantaged women to provide them with skills to improve their work opportunities and to mitigate hardships that they face.

Methods

In order to understand the current opportunities for the disadvantaged women of Moroccan society it is best to experience these opportunities first hand. Participant observation research is a type of qualitative research that produces findings that cannot be arrived at through means of statistical procedures. Some argue that this research can be more difficult as it deals with analyzing people's lives, stories and behaviors as well as organizations and relationships (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). This research focuses on understanding the relationship between attitudes, values and legal rights regarding women and how it translates into opportunities for women in Morocco.



Image A: Volunteering at the Iftar buffet at Amal Gueliz

Timeline

I spent eight weeks in Morocco and six weeks volunteering on site at Amal Women's Training Center and Moroccan Restaurant in Marrakech (image A). My time on site varied,

though I spent on average four and a half hours at the center each day, Monday-Thursday. On a few occasions I was at the center for over eight hours. During Ramadan when Amal hours were altered, I assisted with preparing and serving food for Iftar, the first meal after breaking fast. After Ramadan ended, I started work toward eleven in the morning and helped in the kitchen prepping and cooking food for the lunch that was served at the Gueliz center.

Participants

The Amal Women's Training Center and Moroccan Restaurant in Marrakesh is where I spent six weeks volunteering while conducting research on the opportunities for women that they provide. The disadvantaged women that the shelter serves are a fragile population and direct interviews with them were minimal and informal. Amal staff and volunteers were the main source of verbal data collected, other data included direct observations and center statistics.

My study included seven specific research participants as well as observations of many others. I define participants as those I was able to speak with and ask questions of in English. Of the participants only one was a male. Six of the seven participants were college educated and from the middle and upper class. All participants spoke English. Ages of the participants were not collected for this research. I learned of the Amal organization through a former SPAN student who on her return visit to Morocco in 2015 stopped there for a meal. Once I made contact with the general manager, he welcomed the idea of volunteering and completing my research at Amal. Participants were not compensated in any way for their participation in the research.

At Amal there are two distinctive positions, administration and service staff. I volunteered as a member of the service staff and helped prepare food, serve guests and clean up. I was also treated similarly to service staff members and not like that of administrative staff. On two occasions I did help the administrative staff and proofread their website and upcoming Moroccan cookbook. As a member of the service staff, I was able to develop relationships with the trainees even though we could not speak more than a few words to each other. My position allowed me to experience the demands of the center as the trainees do.

A major participant in this research is Yassine A., the general manager of Amal Women's Training Center and Moroccan Restaurant. Yassine, until quitting in 2018 to pursue other opportunities, oversaw both locations and offered important information into the structure of the organization and the deeper need for it in Moroccan society. His knowledge of the center and its operation allowed for the necessary connections with other center staff. Yassine provided data from the center regarding successes and failures, participant information and some follow-up information on the trainees.

Other members of Amal's staff who participated in interviews include the managers of each center, the communications director, and the training manager. I also had the chance to get to know staff at another non-profit in Marrakech that works with the empowerment of individuals. The women's empowerment facilitator at High Atlas Foundation allowed me to conduct a lengthy interview with her about their organization. I gained contact with this non-profit through a fellow American student in my language class that was interning with High Atlas Foundation.

Data Collection

The two main forms of qualitative research methods that were used in this study were interviews and observations. During the interview I conducted, I took notes. Some of the notes were taken directly on my computer and others were taken by hand in a notebook. At the end of the day interview notes were reviewed for clarity and completion. Observations and other interactions were quickly jotted down either in my notebook or a note on my phone and then at the end of the day added with more detail to a file on my computer.

Interviews

I conducted a total of six interviews while in Marrakech. These interviews were scheduled through the general manager to ensure that they did not interfere with daily operations of the center. I developed a list of interview questions (appendix b) that were asked to all of my interviewees. Some questions were developed on the spot based on something that came up or that I had observed. Interview questions were developed from information about the status of women and stereotypes that were taken from the literature review. Of the interviews, five were of Amal's staff. The first interview I conducted was with Yassine A., the general manager. He then helped me get scheduled with Khalida M. and Meryem T., the directors of Gueliz and Targa. I was able to interview the communications manager, Aicha Z., on one of the days I was reviewing the cookbook and it would not load. My interview with the Targa manager was the last one conducted before I left the center in July.

After meeting an American student at the Center for Language and Culture where I was taking beginner Darija lessons, I learned that she was volunteering at a non-profit organization

in the city. I was invited to High Atlas Foundation on a few occasions to share meals. The American students interning there organized an interview with the women's empowerment facilitator.

Observations

The other data collection method that I employed was observations. I observed daily operations and interactions. Interactions included those between staff, between administrative staff and trainees, between service staff and trainees and also interaction among trainees. As a member of the service staff myself, I interacted with the administrative staff in a similar manner to that of the trainees. Observations of behaviors, organization, and responsibilities were recorded in a notebook or file on my phone and then later added to a document on the computer. Observations included photographs so that the reader could get a better visual sense of the operations and individuals at Amal Women's Training Center and Moroccan Restaurant.

Data Interpretation

Interview and observation notes were recorded either digitally or on paper. Information that needed more detail was added to the notes at the end of the day. If clarity was still needed on something, the organization's websites were used to fill in the blanks on an individual or center process. After the qualitative data were collected in Morocco, they were reviewed and organized into categories. I use the categories of history, success/failures, and structure to examine Amal as an organization. Later, I use the categories of issues, divorce, single motherhood, and class to examine the trainees who enroll in the Amal program.

Amal Women's Training Center and Moroccan Restaurant

History

Amal Women's Training Center and Moroccan restaurant was founded in 2012 as a way to help extremely poor and disadvantaged women living in Marrakech, Morocco. Originally the idea was for a small center that trained a select few women to make and sell pastries. Since opening in 2012, Amal has grown from its initial vision into a full-service Moroccan restaurant and catering service operation out of two locations, one in each the Gueliz and Targa neighborhoods of Marrakech. The initial center in Gueliz offers breakfast and lunch service and an Iftar buffet during Ramadan. Iftar or "breakfast" is the first meal of the day after breaking fast during the Islamic holiday of Ramadan. At the center in Targa the main focus is on catering events and cooking classes that tourists and Moroccans can enroll in. These services allow for Amal to be entirely self-sufficient in its training program for Moroccan women. The center was originally started with help from Drosos Foundation and other donors.

The general manager has been with the organization since the beginning when he was asked to help serve on the hiring board. He remained with the center until December of 2017 when he left to pursue other opportunities. His position was intended to be for a female but after unsuccessful attempts to find a qualified candidate he was offered the position. Yassine A. works under the executive board to carry out the vision of the center, after the opening of the second center two women were brought in to direct each one. Hassan coordinates the work of both centers and helps with decision making.

Structure

When Amal first started they had to rely on other NGO's in the area to recruit women for their training program. To generate interest in their program they went around to NGO's working with women and asked if they had anyone that was eligible and interested in their unique opportunity. Criteria for selection emphasize the selection of women who are disadvantaged and motivated. The four criteria for selection are: aged 18-35, proof of little or no income, social case, and the willingness to learn. This is evaluated through an interview process and official government documents. In order to prove that they have little or no income a woman must show her RAMEL card, a card given by the state to individuals and families who are of the lower class. A RAMEL card allows people to receive lower prices in public hospitals and is not given out if you have an income (Yassine A., personal communication, June 24, 2017). Other documents that prove their social case are also requested. A social case is another factor that establishes these women's disadvantaged and includes divorcees, single mothers, widows, and orphans. Amal looks at all of these factors plus the individual's motivation and personality in hopes of selecting the most disadvantaged and most promising trainees. Figure A depicts the number of trainees in each group and what backgrounds they came from.

STATISTIQUES / STATISTICS

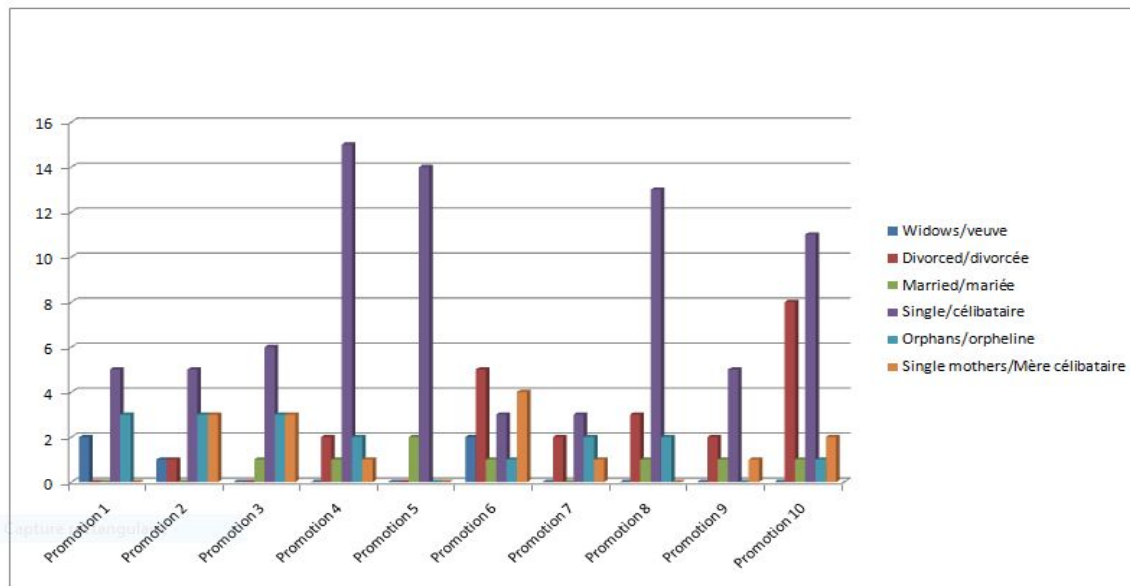


Figure A: Characteristics of Trainees in each session, amalnonprofit.org

The first group was made up of ten participants, they now take 20 per session. Word of mouth has also taken over as their new form of recruitment and they typically receive over 100 applications for the program. As of June 2017, they were working with their tenth group of women, these are the women who participated in the research. Once selected for the program the training is completely free and Amal also provides health insurance, transportation in the form of a city bus card, help with childcare, meals twice daily, and a weekly stipend for expenses. The center will also help out with the cost of medication as needed. Training lasts for a total of six months and the trainees rotate the different stations on a schedule (salads, sauces, American pastries, serving, etc.). They are also taught basic French and English and personal hygiene skills.

The program teaches the women how to communicate with clients and superiors, how to respect rules and what it is like working full time in the real world. Trainees work six days a

week from 44-51 hours; start and end times vary based on center location and season (Khalida M. & Meryem T., personal communication, July 3, 2017 & July 4, 2017).

Amal not only trains women for work in the restaurant and service industry but they also help their trainees find jobs after completion of the program. Each participant is found the maximum of two positions by the Amal staff, if the woman declines these offers they are then on their own to find employment. Staff do attempt to work with each woman's employment preferences and this limit is in place because too many women made excuses for not accepting the job ("not enough money", "don't want to work in a house") (Yassine A., personal communication, June 4, 2017). Most job offers come from restaurant owners who have come to Amal and others come from the network of individuals that has developed over the years. General manager Yassine A. explains that the women are given positive reviews from employers and that their skill level exceeds that of the women coming from the public cooking schools (personal communication, June 4, 2017).

After being hired, most estimated to be making around 2000-3000 DH (200-300 USD) a month, though the center has yet to obtain follow-up data on all of its trainees. This amount is just above the minimum wage in Morocco, but, making minimum wage is considered to be a good thing in the country.. Decent pay is hard to come by for those lacking a high school diploma or other good employable skills. Former trainees who are making this amount gain independence and the ability to rent their own room in a house and buy cheap vegetables. The general manager says that 3000 DH allows them to support a family of four (personal communication, June 4, 2017).

Successes/Failures

The overall goal of the institute is to provide disadvantaged women with employable skills so they can become independent. Of the 118 women who have gone through the program (up to session 8: session 9 and 10 were ongoing during the time of this research) 103 are currently employed, this is an 87% success rate for employment (Yassine A., personal communication, June 4, 2017). Of the 15 that are unemployed 3 did not find a job either because they turned down too many or did not have enough skills, 3 were asked to leave by Amal, and 9 left the program on their own before completion. Two of the three were asked to leave for a stealing offense and the other was asked to leave over a disciplinary offense. The women who left the program did so because they did not like it or had different expectations. Trainees are said to have better skills than those graduating from the public cooking schools. At public cooking school the trainees must have a high school diploma and pay to attend the courses, this makes it unattainable to the population of women that Amal serves.

Moroccan Women and Issues They Face

In Morocco women face many issues that interfere with their day to day realities. These issues range from trouble finding jobs, obstacles in gaining skills to be employed, and stereotypes about their gender. Previous research has discussed these issues and my independent interviews and observations at Amal have taught me more about them.

Stereotypes about Working Women

Women in the workplace is a newer concept for Moroccans than it is for Americans. It wasn't until the 1960's that Moroccan women began to accept jobs outside of the home but

until more recently it has not started to become more mainstream. Previous to that women were full-time homemakers in charge of cleaning, cooking and raising the children. Some women still carry the idea that being a housewife is the only option available to them (Aicha Z., personal communication, June 23, 2017). Research suggests that the first women who started working did it because their husbands did not earn enough to support their families. This left women to bear the responsibility, and also the negative stereotypes, that surrounded it.

At Amal Association one way a woman qualifies for the program is by belonging to a disadvantaged group. Almost all of these women are unemployed. When they try to enter the program, some are met with backlash from their families as more traditional Moroccans still believe that women should not work. Within the staff at Amal there is mixed opinion as to whether the stereotype of women in the workplace still exists today. Some, like the director, believe it doesn't, while the training manager sees it in many forms. Though Yassine A. says that there is not a stereotype of any kind regarding women who work, he does offer an explanation as to why women traditionally did not work. He explains that a shift took place during the seventies and women began entering the workplace. Prior to that time, it was uncommon for women to work. It is no longer uncommon to see women participating in the workforce. The traditional way of thinking considers it a service to women to ask them to stay at home instead of working. He believes that is still true today. Women, the thinking goes, are being protected when they stay home and that allows a woman the ability to take care of herself (Yassine A., personal communication, 2017). According to Rabia K., this thinking is common in the older generation and is meant as a sign of respect. Yassine further describes the importance of women and mothers at home. The structure of the home is different when the mother is home

because she can better guide and educate the children. The importance of a woman at home is educational: “the mother is the school, if you prepare her you will prepare a whole nation.”

Without a mother at home, more social problems develop (personal communication, June 24, 2017). Going to work over staying home and taking care of your home and kids is seen as a negative quality for women (Aicha Z., personal communication, June 23, 2017). An issue that the staff at Amal runs into while accepting training recruits is that in more rural and poor environments the men do not allow the women to work (Meryem T., personal communication, July 3, 2017). When these women do try and engage in the services Amal has to offer they are met with resistance and in some cases not allowed to attend the training program. In rural environments, it is not uncommon for men to stop women from working entirely (Meryem T., personal communication, July 3, 2017). To some, being married is considered a full-time job (Aicha Z., personal communication, June 23, 2017).

According to some Amal staff, it is easier for women to find jobs in service and support positions than in administrative positions. They say that admin positions are reserved for men while service positions, like kitchen staff, are for women. Men, they argue, are better managers and should get the top position, while women are better suited to be their assistants. Other jobs, Meryem says it doesn't matter what your gender is as long as you have the necessary skills, she says this is especially true in larger companies (personal communication, July 3, 2017). Interestingly, at Amal the manager is a male and the two directors of Gueliz and Targa are female. Yassine says his position was intended to go to a female, but they could not find a female qualified enough or willing to take the pay. Even after being brought on as the manager, Yassine was supposed to move out of that role after the center was running and hand it over to

a woman. Instead the board of directors made the decision to keep him on as general manager and hired female directors to work underneath him. Recently, as of December 28th, he has left his position at Amal to explore other opportunities (Yassine A., personal communication, December 28, 2017). Culturally, some say, it is expected for a woman to take a job with a lower salary. If a woman makes a large salary people would say that she is in prostitution or has used her looks to get the job. Most Moroccans, according to the training manager, believe that women still do not have the skills necessary to be employed or the experience (personal communication, June 24, 2017). The consensus among the staff at Amal is that overall the environment of Morocco is changing and there is less of a negative stereotype of women working now than there was ten years ago.

Divorce

Prior to the Moudawana reform in 2004 women were not able to divorce their husbands without consent and could not have custody of the children after the divorce (Zoglin, 2009). Though the new law isn't perfect, it does allow more opportunities for women to initiate and obtain a divorce from their husbands and also the ability to gain custody of their children. Negative attitudes toward divorce are still prevalent within the society. Aicha Z., the communication manager at Amal explained that though it is legally acceptable to divorce your husband, it is not socially acceptable. Sometimes divorced women are disowned by their families because they are seen as a failure. It is especially damaging if the husband requested the divorce because this shows society that you were not a good wife. In Moroccan culture women divorced for this reason are a failure because they could not make the marriage work (Aicha Z., personal communication, June 23, 2017). Women are socialized to believe that their

job is to be a wife and a mother and are not typically socialized to be independent. Not all women are disowned from their family and some are still supported by them after the divorce. Women struggle with numerous issues once they are divorced including difficulty finding housing. According to Meryem and the Rabia, once Moroccan women are divorced they are seen as potential prostitutes because they are no longer married and also no longer virgins. This interferes with their ability to find housing because landlords worry they may bring men back to their homes to engage in prostitution. Staff at Amal proposed the solution of education to end this stereotype about divorced women and explained that in lower educated areas this stereotype is more prevalent. According to the training manager it is no longer as difficult for divorced women to remarry as it was in the past and that numerous Amal trainees over the years have remarried following a divorce.

Single Motherhood

Single mothers in Morocco are constantly fighting against public stigma. If a single mother was never married she faces even more challenges because in Shariah and Moroccan law sex outside of the confines of marriage is illegal. For lots of women, being a single mother makes life more difficult because they are not very welcome in society (Meryem T., personal communication, July 3, 2017). Most single mothers that come to Amal have never been married and have lost the support of their families. They lose their support because they are ruining the dignity of the family and are judged as being inferior and sinful. In some rare cases, Rabia explained, that some women are still supported by their families. Women in the family are said to be slightly more accepting than males (personal communication, July 3, 2017). A woman training at the program in the summer was a single mother of two children who was still

supported and living with her family. This shows that to Amal staff and some families these are not disqualifying factors to the woman. Khalida M. explained that these people are still in the minority (personal communication, July 4, 2017). Fathers of the child birthed out of wedlock have a much easier road than their mothers. The typical reaction of a father, according to the staff at Amal, is to deny that the child is theirs. Because the father does not physically carry the child he is able to say that he cannot confirm it is his and leave the mother. Men also face less social stigmatization if they sleep around before marriage. They also face fewer direct consequences like unwanted pregnancies (Rabia K., personal communication, July 3, 2017).

Finding a marriage partner or getting married as a single mother is another challenge. Single mothers have children and have lost their virginity. Islam instructs Moroccan men to look for partners who are pure. This makes it difficult for them to take a single mother as their bride. If women are married or remarried their partner may use their lack of virginity against them. (Rabia K., personal communication, July 3, 2017). Single mothers may also find it difficult to support their child because they have no husband or family to support them. Finding a job as a single mother is possible but according to Meryem K., some employers may treat the women with less respect if they know she is an unmarried mother (personal communication, July 3, 2017). Khalida M. stresses that at Amal they do not talk about religion and politics and are accepting of differences (personal communication, July 4, 2017).

Social Class

Overall Morocco is a very socially segregated country with a large divide between the rich and the poor. Members of the upper class are more likely to speak multiple languages; English, French and Darija, though they favor French. The women who come to Amal are from

disadvantaged backgrounds and very poor. Only a few spoke a language other than Darija or Berber. Interacting with the women at Amal was difficult, during my time there only one spoke enough English to have a conversation with me and she helped with translations. Staff at Amal spoke English, French and Darija, only a couple spoke Berber. The training staff taught the women at the center basic English and French so that they would be qualified for later jobs working with wealthy Moroccans and tourists. Upper class Moroccan women have greater opportunities for education than women coming from poor or rural areas. The staff at Amal are an example of this. They are all educated and have earned college degrees. They come from middle and upper-class backgrounds. Amal trainees come from lower class backgrounds and some are even illiterate. They may go to school depending on its location and their family life. If it is far, some may not go at all or go only until they are able to read and write. Some go to school but never receive a diploma (Aicha Z., personal communication, June 3, 2017). In public, Moroccan women who ride public transportation or who are seen in the medina are commonly observed wearing djellabas (traditional dress) and a hijab (head covering). Most trainees at Amal also wore hijabs. Out of the female administrative staff at the center the majority did not wear hijabs and dressed in clothes more typical of French or western fashion.

While volunteering I observed a noticeable divide between the administrative staff and the trainees at Amal. The staff, in explaining their duties at Amal, implied that the women who come there need to be taught basic skills like hygiene and basic manners. The assumption at Amal is that if they do not have cameras the women will steal from them. Staff also stated that the trainees need to be educated in order to find a good job. I noticed on numerous occasions that it was common for the staff to discuss things in front of the trainees in either English or

French, languages that the trainees usually did not know. At meal breaks the trainees share a communal meal that typically consists of leftovers. A communal meal in Morocco is when a group of people share a large bowl of food and use their hands or bread in place of silverware. These meals typically take place at a small table around which the trainees sit on little stools (image B). Administrative staff at Amal eat items off the menu in individual bowls and at tables in the restaurant.

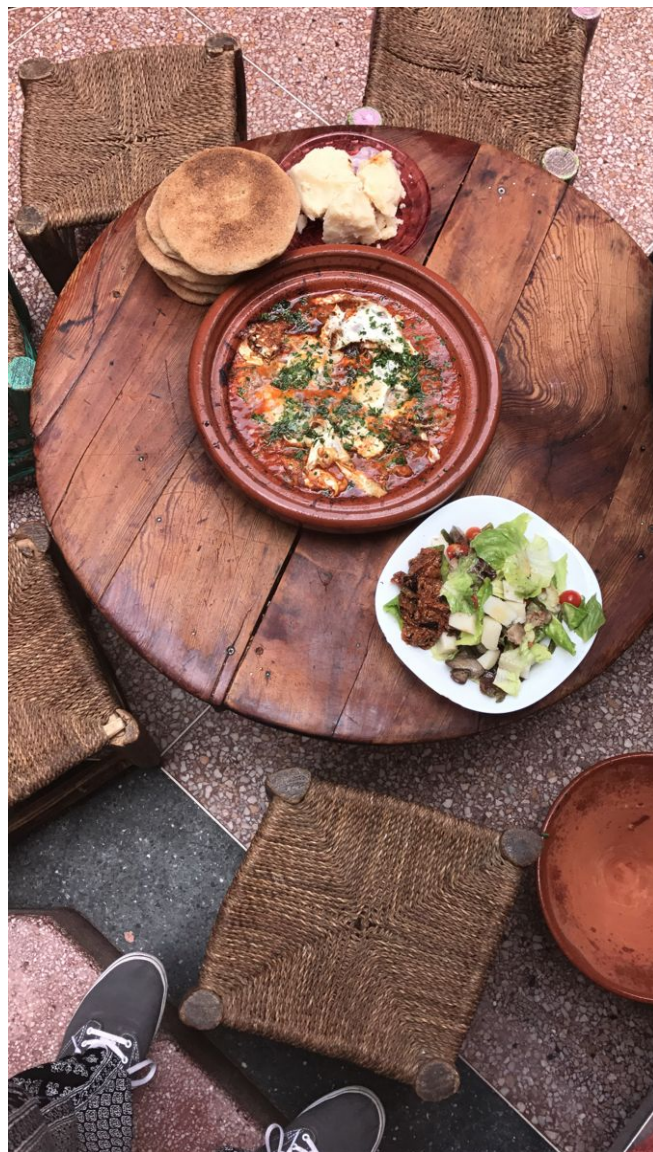


Image B: Lunch set for service staff & trainees

Other programs, proposal and evaluation

Amal isn't the only social service in Morocco working to better the lives of women living in poverty. This section offers a critical assessment of Amal's program and proposals for potential improvement additionally considering another non-profit based in Marrakech with similar goals.

High Atlas Foundation

High Atlas Foundation was founded in 2000 and is made up of a team of Moroccans and Americans working towards the development of a self-sustaining future for Morocco. High Atlas Foundation, or HAF for short, has offices in New York city and Marrakesh. They have many notable partnerships including the United Nations Economic and Social Council, Land O'Lakes International Development, Clinton Global Initiative, The University of Washington, and many others. Their staff and interns work, with the help of their partners and donors, to establish livelihood advancement projects. These include programs that focus on agriculture, youth, clean drinking water, cultural diversity, clean energy, training, and women. HAF makes a point to work with local communities and allows them to develop and manage the projects taking place in their area. They use this method of participation as a way to help ensure sustainable self-development in the country. King Mohammed VI described their participatory approach as beneficial because "citizens are the engine for and ultimate objective of all initiatives" (High Atlas Foundation, 2017).

One of HAF's programs works with women to empower them so that they can enjoy the benefits of political and socioeconomic spheres. They believe that women are an integral part

of the development of a sustainable Morocco (High Atlas Foundation, 2017). Women in Morocco, particularly in rural areas, typically have little access to education, financial resources and political power. The goal of the HAF program is to address these disparities by educating women on their legal rights by teaching them how to exercise them. They also educate individuals on women's issues and work with them to create tools to improve their financial independence (Farida L., personal communication, June 28, 2017). Projects they are involved in to assist women include building bathrooms to increase girls' attendance at school and building drinking facilities, so women and girls do not have to spend as much time getting water (High Atlas Foundation, 2017). According to Farida L., the women's empowerment facilitator at HAF, most rural schools did not have a bathroom facility, something that prevented girls from attending regularly (personal communication, June 28, 2017).

They also offer a four-day women's empowerment training for women in remote areas. They offer this training once a month in different areas of Morocco and work with 25 women at a time. The participant number is capped at twenty-five to ensure the opportunity for one-on-one interaction between the women and instructors. In the training sessions the women learn skills in seven areas of their life including finances, sexuality and emotional health. The goal of this program is to help women create the life that they want and teach them that they are able to be independent and make it on their own. It is also a chance for self-discovery and helps women learn what areas of their life they need to work on. Lots of women, she explains, have issues with sexuality and identify it as an area of particular need. The facilitator says that empowerment is education for these women. Most participants did not attend school at all or very much and are illiterate. Of the program participants a majority do not work and

the biggest issue they face is wanting to improve and live a better life. When trying to attend the program some women struggle with going because their husbands believe the program is a waste and do not want them to participate. Usually the program staff are able to convince the husband to let his wife attend but occasionally some women are still not able to participate due to their husband's objection. The training that is free for women teaches them to know their rights under the law. The moudawana, the reformed legal code granting more rights to women, Farida L. explains is good for women, but is only truly good if women know about it (personal communication, June 28, 2017). Some positive results of their program include women deciding to go back to school, development of a women's co-op, recognition from a husband after receiving a paycheck and women feeling more independent. Though the programs put on by High Atlas Foundation are not directly comparable to those of Amal both organizations do share similar goals of women's empowerment. Some ideas from HAF may be borrowed to better improve the successes already achieved at Amal.

Evaluation

The goal of the training program at Amal is to give women culinary and personal skills so that they can eventually become financially independent. Amal trainees are fully provided for by the center during their six months of training and their internship and the center teaches them practical and advanced skills to work in a kitchen or restaurant environment. Upon successful completion of the program, Amal staff help the program graduates find jobs. As of June 2017, 87% of their program graduates were employed. The Amal institute is successful at providing opportunities for disadvantaged women. It provides these opportunities to an extent though and only provides them with skills to be employed as a service staff. Amal trainees are

taught to occupy a certain space in society, they are trained in language, manners, service, and personal hygiene so that they can work for the upper class. The Amal program does not empower them to be above their social class definition or provide a way out of it. The program instead teaches them how to operate within their social class and still be financially independent. Staff at Amal reinforce the social divide that is found within Moroccan society and maintain the interaction differences between the two groups. All interaction with trainees by staff was in management or education style, and the trainees are expected to be polite and obedient. Women trainees and myself as a volunteer worked long hours in kitchens well above 100 degrees Fahrenheit. During Ramadan, the period of fasting for Muslims, the women were still expected to work just as hard and for long hours. One event I volunteered at lasted well into the night and most women had been at Amal since eight in the morning (image B). The meal provided at this event for staff was leftover food that was made for the event. For most of the women this was their first meal of the day and they had to eat it quickly and get back to work. Management at events and during regular days was extremely strict, demanding high standards, intolerant of mistakes. Commands or instructions were given and if you missed it or did not understand, the trainees were not given a second chance to learn it. As a volunteer with no training in a kitchen or serving food at a professionally catered event, I was treated with the same attitude. Amal trains women to be labor. In that sense, it is successful. But, it doesn't empower them or really allow for them to be more than a service staff under the current structure of the program.

Proposal

High Atlas Foundation and Amal Women's Training Center and Moroccan Restaurant have two different programs with one similar goal of empowering women. Both programs are successful in their own right and achieve the shared goal in different ways. Amal has a program that is better structured to giving women skills, so they can become financially independent and work under the upper and middle class. There is a need for skilled labor and Amal trains women to fit this need. Amal seems to ignore other aspects of empowerment like self-discovery and the freedom of choice. At High Atlas Foundation the program teaches women that they can be independent and helps them understand who they are and what kinds of laws they have on their side. The program is lacking a structure to get these women financial employment other than the few co-ops and women's agricultural nurseries that they help the women develop. They do respectfully and supportively empower the women in other aspects of their life, though, which makes them successful in completion of their goal.

In order for Amal to empower women on a more well-rounded basis, they could expand their program to be more than just a culinary training program. The definition of empowerment from the Merriam-Webster dictionary says, "the act or action of empowering someone or something: the granting of the power, the right or authority to perform various acts or duties". I believe that Amal is on the right path to this and teaching women a skill so that they can be financially independent is not a bad thing. At Amal though I observed an atmosphere that was empowering women to cook but not to be a fully actualized woman or anything other than part of the labor force in the country. Morocco is segregated between those who have and those who do not have financial resources and high social status. This divide can be seen when

observing women in particular. Some are college educated and speak other languages fluently. They are able to work and provide for themselves. Others did not have the opportunity to attend school or at least are not college educated and the majority do not speak more than one language. These are the women with little opportunities that Amal works with. In order for the program to empower the women socially and individually, along with the economic empowerment they are already doing, the center might focus on an approach that takes from some of High Atlas Foundation's ideas. If Amal would like to expand their goal of women's empowerment to be more comprehensive, as I suggest they should, they could teach not only the women culinary skills as they do now but also educate them on laws and women's issues. In their program the trainees would be treated as equals with staff, similar to how High Atlas Foundation treats the women it works with. Since Amal is still a training school, there will be some hierarchy and the girls need to recognize that, but trainees could still be treated in a more equal way. This would help the program slowly reduce the negative stereotypes and social divide between classes that exist in the country.

Since Amal has been in operation they have helped 126 women make a better life for themselves (Amal Women's Training Center and Moroccan Restaurant, 2016). The majority of the women that Amal trains are from Marrakech and surrounding areas. This is because they need to be able to get to and from the center by the public bus. In Marrakech, their restaurant and cooking classes are a success because of the high volume of tourists visiting the area. Tourists though are not the only patrons of the restaurant. Moroccans regularly attend the Ramadan breakfast and are regular customers for breakfasts and lunches. Amal has opened a catering business that they run out of the Targa center that work with Moroccan businesses.

During my time in the country they worked with the city bus company, a girl's juvenile center, and a school providing meals for various events. Since their program has proven successful in Marrakesh, I believe their next step in helping more women would be expanding their program to more cities. Because their program is self-sufficient the new training center and Moroccan restaurant would need to be located in another big city with a heavy tourist population, potentially Rabat or Agadir. The new locations could expand their trainee capacity from 30 women in a six-month period as it is now to 45 or 60 women helped in the same period, depending on how much they are able to expand.

Conclusion

Amal center was founded in 2012 with the goal of helping disadvantaged women. They use cooking as a way to connect women to financial opportunities and help open the door to a better life. They focus on empowering women so that they can be financially independent and have been successful at placing most of the program graduates in jobs that pay at slightly above the minimum wage. This has allowed program graduates to provide for themselves and their families without having to receive governmental assistance. Overall the program has been successful and is currently a self-sustaining institute that always seems to be busy. In Morocco I volunteered at Amal for six weeks working as one of the service staff. I conducted interviews with some of the administrative staff and observed the center's daily operations. Through this I attempted to understand the actual situation of Moroccan women, especially those who are disadvantaged, and what the organization is doing to help them. Through my research I learned that there are limitations to its success, though. If one judges the program solely on training women for jobs and then later helping the graduates find jobs, then they would be considered

successful. The goal of the center though is empowerment. Finding a job is hardly the only area of empowerment that disadvantaged women in Morocco need. Because Amal only truly focuses on one area of women's empowerment, I believe they are successful but in a limited way. Improvements to the program could be made based on the women's empowerment training program that another non-profit in Marrakech, High Atlas Foundation, is using to help rural women. Amal Women's Training Center and Moroccan Restaurant could also expand its program so that it is able to serve more women in other locations in Morocco. This would not only increase the number of trainees but would also make the vision of the program more visible and hopefully more influential in the country.

Appendix A

Amal Staff and Participant Biographies

Some names have been changed to protect identities

Nora Fitzgerald Belahcen: Founder of Amal in 2012. She conceived of the idea of Amal because she wanted to help the extremely poor and disadvantaged women in Marrakech. Amal was her response to the difficulties that many widows, divorcees, single mothers and other disadvantaged women faced. She is a Moroccan-American who grew up in Marrakech.

Yassine A. : General Manager of Amal, December 2013- December 2017. Hassan began his career with Amal almost accidentally. He started off volunteering and doing handyman work when the center was in its early phases of development. He then helped with the hiring process for the general manager position and when they could not find someone for the position, they offered it to him. He helped coordinate my time at Amal.

Khalida M. : Director of Amal- Targa and a member of the team since May 2015. She began her career with Amal as the communication manager and was quickly promoted to director when the Targa location was opened. She has a degree in the sciences and was introduced to Amal by a friend. She thinks of herself as a feminist and started out volunteering before being asked to work for the center.

Meryem T. : Director of Amal- Gueliz and Amal staff since May 2016. She holds a master's degree from a university in Tangiers and started volunteering at Amal when she was home to visit her parents one summer. She attended high school with Oumaima and was introduced to the program by her. After a month of volunteering she was asked to be the training manager. Three months later she was promoted to Gueliz director.

Aicha Z. : Amal Communications manager. After graduating from a university in France with a master's degree, she came home to Morocco and decided to take a break before working. She knew of the center because her mother was close friends with the general manager. She was looking for something to do and her mother told her that Amal was looking for volunteers and she could do it on her own time. What started off as volunteering a few mornings each week soon turned into volunteering full-time. In June of 2017 she was offered a full-time position as the communications manager.

Rabia K. : Training manager of Amal. When she was offered the position of training manager at Amal she was working for another NGO and not looking for a different job. She met the general manager and Targa director at a training in Rabat and they asked her if she would move if a job opportunity opened up. She told them she would think about it. Later she came to the center to have lunch and the training manager position had opened up. She told them she would start in June 2017.

Nadia H. : Amal promotion 10 Trainee (2017). She is a single mother of two little girls living with her parents in Marrakech. She speaks Darija and English and was able to communicate with me fairly well. She came to Amal so that she could get a job and make money for her family.

Farida L. : High Atlas Foundation administrative officer and women's empowerment facilitator. She has a bachelor's degree from a university in Morocco and has been part of the High Atlas team since 2012. She works with rural Moroccan women on a range of projects and focuses on self-empowerment. She also provides support for other HAF projects in the country

Appendix B

Variation of Questions asked to Interview Participants

- How did you get involved with Amal and why?
- What is your role at Amal and what does it look like?
- How does Amal recruit its trainees?
- How are the women in Amal's program selected?
- What are some things that make the women here considered disadvantaged?
- How many successfully graduate the program each year? (out of how many?)
- What happens once they leave the program?
- What do their new lives look like compared to the one they were living before Amal from what you have seen?
 - Idea of before Amal and after Amal wages?
- What is the stereotype of women working in Morocco in your opinion?
- How do you think society views single mothers? Why?
- What is it like to be a divorced woman in Moroccan society? How are they seen?
- What is it like for single mothers?
- Do you think it is harder for females to find jobs?

Annotated Bibliography

Amado, L.E. (2004). Sexual and Bodily Rights as Human Rights in the Middle East and North Africa. *Reproductive Health Matters*, Vol. 12, No. 23, 2004, 125-128. Retrieved from http://www.jstor.org.libpdb.d.umn.edu:2048/stable/3775980?seq=1#page_scan_tab_contents

This article summarizes the attitudes of participants at a women's human rights conference that was held in Malta. Amado states that the majority of workshop participants expressed a general feeling of lack of control over their own body due to constraints like law, religion and patriarchy. In the Middle East and parts of North Africa, a woman's body is "reproductive property" of the family and society. Traditional Islamic law treats crimes against a woman's body, like rape, as a property crime. Attitudes at the workshop showed that countries, Morocco included, were becoming more progressive with their treatment of women and sexuality but participants concluded that it is still a taboo subject.

This article was used as background information on the attitudes toward sexuality and women's rights in Morocco's Islamic culture. To understand the attitudes about sexual assault, I think it is necessary to first understand the country's background on sexuality and gender rights.

Amal Women's Training Center and Moroccan Restaurant. (2016). Retrieved from <http://amalnonprofit.org/>

Amal Women's Training Center is where I conducted the extent of my research on opportunities for women in Moroccan culture. This is the official website for the training center and restaurant and includes information about the history and the purpose along with general information about the restaurant and cooking classes offered.

Amal's website served my research in that it was a starting point in understanding the goals of the center and an idea generator of what questions to ask the center's staff about these goals.

Canada: Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, *Morocco: Application of adultery laws, in particular, of Article 490 of the Penal Code and of the articles that follow it; treatment by family members and in-laws of people who commit adultery* (2013) Retrieved from <http://www.refworld.org/docid/53732b014.html>

Canada's immigration and refugee board put together this piece addressing Morocco's penal code and in particular article 490. Article 490 states that sex outside of marriage is prohibited and that it is punishable by one month to a year in prison. It also looks at other penal code articles that are directly related to article 490 including article 491, 492, and 493. The immigration and refugee board also included applications of these articles and the treatment of those accused of adultery in Moroccan society.

Since this piece covers the adultery law, article 490, it is essential to my research in explaining the consequences of breaking Shariah law and committing adultery which is prohibited by it.

Other articles discuss that in Morocco adultery is prohibited but this is the first one to cite the specific penal code article and offer the legal consequences of this crime.

This research was instrumental in the introduction where Shariah law is explained as an example of how it is practiced and translated into Moroccan penal code. It is also a recent piece so the penal code is up to date regarding these articles.

Dialmy, A. (2002). Premarital Female Sexuality in Morocco. *Al-Raida*. Vol. XX, No. 99. Fall 2002-2003. 75-83. Retrieved from <http://www.alraidajournal.com/index.php/ALRJ/article/viewFile/466/464>

The author of this research on premarital sex in Morocco looked at the history of sexual interaction for women and the strong influence of virginity. He found that the age of marriage for girls is increasing as more women are educated and the country is becoming more urban. At the same time, instances of premarital sex are also increasing. In Morocco, sex before marriage is illegal but traditionally boys can engage in it with less social stigma. For women to maintain their purity and body capital, virginity procedures are common where the hymen is stitched up. As families try to instill in their children that premarital sex is bad, children are taught how to find sexual pleasure without defloration. Dialmy goes on to conclude that sexuality in Morocco is in a current state of transition towards a more sexually accepting society.

This research by Dialmy offers a contextual background on how sex is viewed and engaged in.

Hamilton, R. (2011). *The last storytellers: tales from the heart of Morocco*. London: I.B. Tauris.

This book by Hamilton is a collection of traditional Moroccan tales from storytellers in the country. These stories give the listener and reader insight into the culture and values of Moroccan society. A few of the stories stand out in their portrayal of women, though most feature a "beautiful woman" at some point in the plot. "The Girl Who Fell in Love with the Hermit" features a woman who wants someone sexually and when she is denied by him she lays with another man. Upon becoming pregnant with the child of the second man, she publicly accuses the first man of raping her. "Nour and the Sultan" is the story of a young girl who catches one of the Sultan's wives cheating on him and because of her loyalty to the Sultan, he offers to marry her.

Though the stories in this book are purely fables and therefore fictional, they still serve an important purpose in the context of Moroccan culture. Like fairytales in my own culture, these stories teach important lessons about society and the behaviors that are welcome (and not welcome) within it.

In particular, this book is beneficial to my own research as it offers insight into the role of women and sexuality in the context of the culture. These stories help support the research that I have already found and potentially provide more readability to the literature review.

High Atlas Foundation. (2017). Retrieved from <http://www.hihatlasfoundation.org/>

This is the official website of the High Atlas Foundation in Morocco. HAF focuses on the empowerment of rural Moroccans and one of their programs is developed for women. Their website includes information about the services they offer, their mission and sources of their funding.

The website reference is important to my research as it offers a more comprehensive view of the program than what was provided in my interview with the women's program facilitator. High Atlas Foundation will serve as model for some program additions at Amal.

Hisham Kabbani, M. *Understanding Islamic Law*. Retrieved from <http://www.islamicsupremecouncil.org/understanding-islam/legal-rulings/52-understanding-islamic-law.html>

The Islamic Supreme Council of America and Hisham Kabbani put together this guide to understanding Shariah law. In Morocco, the importance of religion is held very high. This article explains Shariah law and differentiates it from Islamic Law as practiced in Islamic States. It states what aspects are governed by Shariah law and the reasons for them as stated in the Quran. This is a very informative piece that allows the reader to gain a true understanding of Shariah law without biases from outside agencies.

Information from this guide was covered in the introduction section and helped explain Islam and the applications and purposes of Shariah law. Since religious aspects show up in so many other parts of Moroccan culture it is helpful to have an understanding going into my research so that other aspects make sense in the context of Islam.

Kadri, N., Berrada, S, Mchichi Alami, KH., Manoudi, F., Rachidi, L., Maftouh, S., Halbreich, U. Mental health of Moroccan women, a sexual perspective. (2006). *Journal of Affective Disorders*. Vol. 102. 2007. 199-207. doi:10.1016/j.jad.2006.09.028.

This study focused on various aspects of women's sexuality by reviewing data obtained through survey questions and face-to-face interviews with women. When asked about why women engage in sex, most women responded that it was for reproductive reasons, while others stated that it was to pleasure their husband. Very few women responded that they had sex for their own pleasure. Women were also asked about infidelity, and the majority responded that it is forgivable for men. Part of the study also examined the prevalence of childhood sexual abuse and its correlation with sexual dysfunction. The researchers found that of the sample, 9.2% reported childhood sexual abuse and of those they found a correlation between childhood sexual abuse and dyspareunia vaginismus.

This shows that sexuality is still a taboo topic for women. I use this data to discuss women's opinions on sex as it relates to their culture.

Labott, E., & Alami, A. (2011, July 1). Morocco approves constitutional reforms. *CNN World*. Retrieved from <http://www.cnn.com/2011/WORLD/africa/07/01/morocco.vote.reforms/>

This article by CNN World news explains that the 2011 referendum as proposed by King Mohammed VI was passed by a popular vote with over 98% approval. This referendum was the result of protests in Morocco that called for reform that broke out earlier in February. The referendum weakens the king's power along with a few other changes.

The CNN World News article covering this topic covers the referendum after it has been passed, the earlier BBC article covered the proposed changes in the referendum before it was passed. These two articles work together in the literature review to provide the full story of the 2011 referendum.

Lipka, M. (2017). Muslims and Islam: Key findings in the U.S. and around the world. The Pew Research Center. Retrieved from <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2017/02/27/muslims-and-islam-key-findings-in-the-u-s-and-around-the-world/>

Morocco is a primarily Islamic country so in order to help put into perspective some of the cultures ideals and values are, it is essential to have a starting point of understanding "what is Islam". This research introduces Islam statistically and in comparison, to other world religions. It also presents research on attitudes about Islam and Muslim peoples around the world including the United States.

This allowed me to present Islam on first a factual basis on the sheer numbers of the religion and where most of its followers are located. It also helped me present to the reader what some common attitudes about the religion are before introducing the basics of Islam. It is important for my research that some understanding of Islam be gained in order to see things in a way that are in line with the cultural lens.

Obermeyer, C. M. (2000). Sexuality in Morocco: Changing context and contested domain. *Culture, Health & Sexuality*, 2(3), 239-254. doi:10.1080/136910500422232

This article offers a critical review of previous research that examined sexuality in Morocco. By examining books and other articles the author offers a look into what sexuality is, what it can't be and how religion and historical events have influenced it in Moroccan culture. Findings of Obermeyer's meta-analysis included the idea the penetrative sex is meant to take place between a dominant male and a subordinate, whether that be a woman, boy or otherwise. Sex is perceived to be as a dominating act by the male partner but also a show of power by the female. Her research also uncovered the common idea that women are seen as being more easily corrupted by sexual desires which can lead to men acting out of what is considered traditional.

Obermeyer's work was beneficial to my research as it spotlights some important ideas and thoughts surrounding sexuality in Morocco. It also offers insight into why these ideas have come about within the culture and their historical and religious significance. This helped me understand my findings on how sexual assault is defined in the Moroccan culture.

Otto, J. M. (2010). *Sharia incorporated: a comparative overview of the legal systems of twelve Muslim countries in past and present*. Amsterdam, Germany. Leiden University Press.

This source outlines in detail the changes to Moroccan and Sharia law over the years. Included in this book is the history of Morocco and the laws that came and went over the years. Also included is criminal and family law in Moroccan national and Sharia law. In the development of some laws promoting the nuclear family, the idea of marriage is for the male to offer the woman financial security in return for her obedience and sexual availability. This idea was overturned in 2004 and replaced with new articles that support a stable family and the support of both spouses. Other interesting laws were examined in this piece such as a law that prohibits a Muslim woman from marrying a non-Muslim but allows for a Muslim man to marry a Jewish or Christian woman.

Though some of this book did not serve my research, it does offer a lot of information of criminal and family laws that are relevant. Research from this book was useful in my review of Moroccan rape and family law and offered background information as to why those laws came about. I think this offered an interesting comparison to current and previous ideas about sexuality.

Q&A: Morocco's referendum on reform. (2011, June 29). *BBC News Africa*. Retrieved from <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-13964550>

This article introduces the constitutional referendum that occurred in 2011. In this referendum, it was proposed that women should receive equal social and civic equality. It also explains the proposed changes to the power of the King and 400-year-old Moroccan dynasty.

Working with the CNN World news article this article provides the full coverage of the 2011 reform and what it is. Alone this article does a good job of explaining the proposed changes but it was written prior to its passing, the CNN article reports that the referendum was passed and why the referendum came about in the first place.

Sadiqi, F., & Ennaji, M. (2006). The Feminization of Public Space: Women's Activism, the Family Law, and Social Change in Morocco. *Journal of Middle East Women's Studies*, 2(2), 86-114. doi:10.1353/jmw.2006.0022

This research article focuses on the feminist movements in Morocco and how they are fighting peacefully for changes in the culture. The discussion of public and private space is something faced by many women, as traditionally, women were meant to be only in the private sphere. Rural and urban women have experienced the change from private to public in ways very

different from each other, with rural women facing more of a struggle. This article further examines the Moroccan feminist movement and the accomplishments it has made.

In particular, this article was useful to my research, as it examines the movement behind some of the progressive changes in the country. This movement is relevant to my topic, as it focuses on women's rights and some of the beliefs that formed the laws around women.

Strauss, A. L., & Corbin, J. M. (1990). *Basics of qualitative research: Grounded Theory Procedures and Techniques*. Newbury Park: Sage Publications.

This book is an instructional guide to the basics of qualitative research. It explains what qualitative research is along with how to do all the aspects of qualitative research from conducting interviews to transcribing and making sense of your notes.

Since my research was purely participant observer this book was essential in helping me plan the method side of my study and learning what to do with the data I collected.

Unicef. (2011). MOROCCO MENA Gender Equality Profile Status of Girls and Women in the Middle East and North Africa. Retrieved from <https://www.unicef.org/gender/files/Morocco-Gender-Eqaulity-Profile-2011.pdf>

This article is a compilation of the results of a gender equality study conducted by researchers at Unicef. It begins by introducing the country in terms of its religion, and legal system along with information about different laws that specifically relate to women like divorce and inheritance laws. It addresses the response of the government and other institutions to the inequality of women and covers the participation of women in government and politics. The remainder of the article covers the statistical data that was collected regarding a variety of women's issues. Some of these issues include women's workforce participation, education, access to contraceptives.

This research by Unicef was beneficial to me as it deals with a lot of important issues facing women that are in line with what I am studying. Finding data on any topic regarding women's rights in Morocco has been hard to do and this article contains data on a lot of topics concerning Moroccan women.

Unicef is a respected organization that puts out reliable information. This research is also current and served a lot of purposes in developing my literature review and understanding the status of gender equality in Morocco.

United Nations Human Rights Office of High Commissioner. (2014). Women's Rights are Human Rights. *United Nations Publications*. Retrieved from <http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Events/WHRD/WomenRightsAreHR.pdf>

In this publication by the United Nations human rights and gender rights are discussed. The human rights council put into place and the nations adopted the declaration to end the

discrimination against women. In this declaration, it states that states should abolish any practices, customs, laws, and regulations that are discriminatory towards women. This publication also covers a lot of other information pertaining to women's rights and what the United Nations are working on doing to ensure women equal rights.

Women's rights are human rights is beneficial to my research as it covers declarations that Morocco as a member of the UN has adopted in order to work on their treatment of women. The later part of my literature review focuses on changes that are being made and what needs to be changed as it leads into why centers like Amal need to exist. It serves as a starting point and as an end goal for what Morocco is working towards as the paper leads into current discrimination against women in the country.

The United Nations is a trustworthy source but the source itself is slightly broad and not specifically a piece on Morocco. Because of this it will only serve to introduce the points that the committee and the United Nations are working on or have proposed to do in regard to fighting discrimination against women.